

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC
Edward W. Morley House
AND/OR COMMON
26 Westland Avenue

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER
26 Westland Avenue
CITY, TOWN
West Hartford
STATE
Connecticut
VICINITY OF
1st
COUNTY
Hartford
CODE
09
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
1st
CODE
003

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
			<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
			<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
			<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY
			<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME
Herbert and Karylen Kramer
STREET & NUMBER
26 Westland Avenue
CITY, TOWN
West Hartford
VICINITY OF
CONNECTICUT

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.
Registry of Deeds
STREET & NUMBER
Hartford County Courthouse
CITY, TOWN
Hartford
STATE
Connecticut

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE
None
DATE
____ FEDERAL ____ STATE ____ COUNTY ____ LOCAL
DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS
CITY, TOWN
STATE

38

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

EXCELLENT DETERIORATED
 GOOD RUINS
 FAIR UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

UNALTERED
 ALTERED

CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE
 MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Twenty-six Westland Avenue in West Hartford, Connecticut, was built by Edward W. Morley in 1906. The detached building is a two-story with attic frame structure. Its style is typical of the period. The house is of no architectural importance.

The integrity of the building is whole. According to the present owner, who has lived in the house for twenty one years, only very minor changes have been made to either the exterior or interior since Morley lived there.

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8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW

<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Edward Williams Morley was born January 29, 1838, in Newark, New Jersey. His father was a Congregational minister and his mother a school teacher. Morley spent his youth in Hartford, Connecticut, and Attleboro, Massachusetts. Because as a boy he suffered from frail health, his parents did not send him to the local schools. He was educated at home under the supervision of his father. Morley was an excellent student. He read at three and began Latin at six. By the time he had finished his teens, he had read his way through his father's library. Science attracted his interest at an early age. When he entered Williams College as a sophomore in 1857, he selected natural history as his major. Morley graduated from Williams in 1860 and then spent an additional year studying astronomy. Because his father and his grandfather were both ministers, Morley next decided to follow their examples. From 1861 to 1864 he studied for the ministry at Andover Theological Seminary. He did not, however, enter the ministry. Upon completing his theological training in 1864, he accepted a teaching position at Marlboro, Massachusetts. He remained in Marlboro until 1868. In 1869 Morley turned down a pastorate at Twinsburg, Ohio, and chose instead to accept the position of professor of chemistry at Western Reserve College in Hudson, Ohio.

Morley moved to Hudson in 1869 and began an association with Western Reserve that lasted throughout his academic career. When the school moved to Cleveland in 1882, Morley helped design the facilities to be used by the science classes. It was at Western Reserve that he conducted the basic research upon which his reputation as a scientist is based. Although Morley's presence contributed to Western Reserve's prestige, his relations with the school were not always amiable. In 1895-96 Morley took a leave of absence to teach in Europe. While he was away the university dismantled the laboratory Morley had spent years assembling. When Morley returned, he found his apparatus, much of which he had designed and built himself, damaged beyond repair. Although he did not retire until 1906, the incident marked the end of Morley's intellectual dedication to the school. With his lab gone Morley ceased to engage in basic research except in collaboration with others.

Upon retiring in 1905 Morley left Cleveland and returned to his native Connecticut. He selected a lot in West Hartford and in 1906 built a house that would be his home until his death in 1923. The funds for the house came from dividends on stock he held in the Dow Chemical Corporation. Morley had done consulting work for the giant corporation at a time when it could only

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Edward W. Morley House

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afford to pay him with shares in the company. In retirement Morley continued to attend scientific meetings, but his chief interest centered on working in a combination garage-laboratory he built at the back of his yard. He died in West Hartford on February 24, 1923, and was buried in the family plot in Pittsfield, Massachusetts.

Morley enjoyed the admiration and esteem of his peers in the scientific community. He was a member of numerous societies and associations in this country and abroad. He served as president of the American Association for the Advancement of Science in 1895 and as president of the American Chemical Society in 1899. Among his medals and prizes were the Davy Medal of the Royal Society of London (1917) and the Elliott Cresson Medal of the Chicago Section of the American Chemical Society (1899).

Morley's reputation as a leading American chemist rests on two major achievements. The first was his collaboration with Albert A. Michelson in the famous Michelson-Morley experiment. In this 1887 experiment, for which Morley helped design and build the apparatus (the famous interferometer), Michelson proved that there was no element in the air called ether which acted as a carrier of light. Michelson was awarded the Nobel Prize for this contribution to physics. The great basic science achievement in Morley's career was his determination of the densities of hydrogen and oxygen and the ratios or weights of each when they combine to form water. Morley's 1895 paper, "On the Densities of Oxygen and Hydrogen and the Ratio of the Atomic Weights," published in the Smithsonian's Contributions to Knowledge, was a major contribution to the study of atomic weights and firmly established his reputation in the front ranks of American chemistry.

Edward Williams Morley's significance in the history of science in America is that he was one of the country's leading chemists during the last twenty five years of the 19th century. In his collaboration with Michelson and in his own research on the atomic weights of hydrogen and oxygen he made a significant contributions to physics and chemistry.

Like many of his colleagues whose education began before the Civil War, and who reached scientific maturity during the second half of the 19th century, Morley experienced the transition for the generalizations of natural history

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to specialization in the physical and biological sciences. Morley's first published paper was in astronomy. By the time he retired he was an expert in atomic weights. Morley's career illustrates the rapid trend to specialization that characterized science at the close of the 19th century. His contributions were also an indication that by 1900 American scientists were moving to a position of equality with their European counterparts.

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